

**MINUTES
ECDE COMMITTEE
MARCH 24, 2010**

ATTENDANCE: Angel DePara, Co-Chair; Tom McCarthy; Mary Yvette Brantley; Lydia Martinez.

STAFF: Ed Lavernoich, Planning & Economic Development.

OTHERS: Councilmember Susan Brannelly; Jack Collins & Kevin Simmons, Burroughs Community Center.

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by the Co-Chair.

37-09

PILOT AGREEMENT WITH THE OWNER OF WAKEMAN BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB SMILOW-BURROUGHS CLUBHOUSE FOR LAND AND BUILDING AT 2468 FAIRFIELD AVENUE FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 8 YEARS

Mr. Lavernoich reviewed the resolution sponsored by three council members to authorize the Mayor to enter into a PILOT agreement. The Wakeman Memorial Association put forth a project that would be tax exempt. The City adopted an ordinance in 2006 that limited the potential for non-profits to own property. This project was precluded from achieving tax-exempt status. That ordinance prevents a not-for-profit that might own property, but not operate the programs on the property, to achieve tax-exempt status. The affect on this project was an unintended consequence. The Wakeman Memorial Association would not be the owner of the real estate. In order to cover the construction period and the 7 years of operation, they have asked for the tax-exempt status.

Councilmember Brannelly said that on the site of this center, they will be building a boys and girls club, a \$7,000,000 project. They have privately raised \$5,500,000. An entity will provide the remainder of the funding (Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation). They are asking for a PILOT for an organization that would not be paying taxes.

Co-Chair DePara said that in 2006, there was an amendment to Bridgeport's tax-exempt status ordinance saying that if a non-profit was going to allow another entity to occupy 20%, they would have to pay taxes.

Councilmember Brannelly said they would lose a \$7,000,000 boys and girls club.

Councilmember McCarthy said in 8 years, there will not be a shell company and they will then be tax-exempt.

Mr. Simmons said this is a unique partnership. He explained the fundraising process which led to the partnership between Wakeman and Burroughs. This boys and girls club will serve kids from the east end of Bridgeport.

Councilmember Brantley asked where the land is that they will be adding. Mr. Simmons showed a photo and said it is right up on Fairfield Avenue next to the boat shop. There will be two separate structures connected by a walkway. The membership will be children from third to twelfth grade but there will be some programming for first and second graders. It will be all for Bridgeport children. He noted that every boys and girls club is a separate organization. \$600,000 will be required to be raised in the first year. They will need at least three full time positions and a significant number of part timers. They hope construction will begin as soon as July 1st and take 8 to 12 months. Councilmember Brantley said this will benefit the community greatly.

Councilmember Martinez asked about outreach. Mr. Simmons said kids will ask what is going on when construction begins. There will be community discussions about the types of programs, etc. Burroughs and Wakeman will be separate and distinct organizations.

**** COUNCILMEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO ENTER EXHIBIT 1/37-09 INTO THE RECORD.**

**** COUNCILMEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

A brief discussion took place on the fact that there will not be a pool on this site.

Councilmember Martinez asked if someone came up with a similar idea if they would then approve that? Councilmember McCarthy pointed out that they are very appreciative of the boys and girls club.

It was noted that Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation is an investor. Mr. Collins said they had a 501C3 corporation to manage these funds.

Councilmember Martinez asked if this was costly for the children from the neighborhood. Mr. Collins said that this was a traditional boys and girls club. Mr. Simmons said this is a very unique opportunity for Bridgeport.

Co-Chair DePara asked if there was an emphasis on hiring Bridgeport-owned businesses. Mr. Collins said that the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation requires minority hiring and they will employ Bridgeport businesses as well.

Councilmember Martinez asked if the people they hire will reflect the children who attend; Mr. Collins responded affirmatively. Mr. Simmons said they make an effort to reflect the diversity of their children.

Councilmember Brantley asked if an RFP would be going out for construction. Mr. Simmons said there will be an open bidding process but noted that there is no City, State or Federal money. Co-Chair DePara noted that they should contact the woman who has a listing of all of the minority businesses.

Councilmember McCarthy said this is a fantastic project.

- ** COUNCILMEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE PILOT AGREEMENT WITH THE OWNER OF WAKEMAN BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB SMILOW-BURROUGHS CLUBHOUSE FOR LAND AND BUILDING AT 2468 FAIRFIELD AVENUE FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED EIGHT YEARS.**
- ** COUNCILMEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Lavernoich said that the PILOT is allowed under the City and Town Development Act. He read provisions of this Act requiring that it be posted in the City Clerk's Office, in the newspaper and that a public hearing must be held within 5 to 14 days. This could take place at the April 5th City Council meeting.

Councilmember McCarthy said this committee cannot order a full Council public hearing; it has to be ordered by the full Council.

- ** COUNCILMEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO ENTER EXHIBIT 2.37-09 INTO THE RECORD.**
- ** COUNCILMEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

After reading the resolution, Councilmember McCarthy said that this committee could hold a public hearing at the full Council meeting.

- ** COUNCILMEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO ORDER A PUBLIC HEARING ON THIS ITEM BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON APRIL 5, 2010.**
- ** COUNCILMEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 23, 2010

- ** COUNCILMEMBER BRANTLEY MOVED TO APPROVE.**
- ** COUNCILMEMBER MCCARTHY SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**
- ** COUNCILMEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCILMEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco
Telesco Secretarial Services